

# **WIRRAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE**

## **INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

**2023 - 2024**

**Internal Audit Service  
Wirral Council**

## Section One

### INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document summarises the results of Internal Audit's planning work. It sets out details of the:
- Responsibilities and scope of internal audit
  - Resourcing and delivery of the Council's internal audit service
  - Arrangements for reporting internal audit work
  - Proposed programme of work areas for 2023/24 (the Audit Plan).
- 1.2 The Audit Plan for 2023/24 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The PSIAS represent mandatory best practice for all internal audit service providers in the public sector.
- 1.3 The Council has adopted the PSIAS definition of internal auditing:
- Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.
- 1.4 In accordance with PSIAS, the mission of internal audit is to:
- Enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight.
- 1.5 The work of internal audit is a key element in delivering the Council's strategic priority of corporate effectiveness and business efficiency, but also supports the Council in achieving all the aims and objectives set out in the Wirral Council Plan.
- 1.6 The PSIAS require that the internal audit service is delivered and developed in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter. The Council has formally agreed provisions relating to internal audit as detailed in the Financial Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter.

## Section Two

### INTERNAL AUDIT – RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCOPE

#### 2.1 *Responsibilities of internal audit*

The internal audit function is responsible for:

- Reviewing and assisting with developing the Council's governance processes. Specifically, this includes:
  - Promoting appropriate ethics and values within the Council
  - Supporting effective organisational performance management and accountability
  - Communicating risk and control information to appropriate areas of the organisation
  - Coordinating the activities of, and communicating information among, Audit and Risk Management Committee, external audit, internal audit and management
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Council's risk management processes and contributing to their improvement
- Assisting in the maintenance and development of an effective control environment by providing robust independent assurance over its operation.

#### 2.2 *Responsibilities of management*

The establishment and maintenance of adequate control systems is the responsibility of management. Recommendations made by internal audit can reduce risk and improve systems of control. However, the implementation of audit recommendations cannot eliminate risk entirely.

### 2.3 *Responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Management Committee*

In regard to internal audit, the Audit and Risk Management Committee is responsible for:

- Approving, but not directing, internal audit's strategy, plan and monitoring performance
- Reviewing summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seeking assurance that action has been taken where necessary
- Receiving and considering the Chief Internal Auditors annual report.

### 2.4 *Responsibilities for fraud prevention and detection*

The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with management. Management's responsibilities include creating an environment where fraud is not tolerated, identifying fraud risks, and taking appropriate actions to ensure that controls are in place to prevent and detect fraud.

It is not the role or responsibility of internal audit to detect fraud. However, internal audit will evaluate the potential for the occurrence of fraud in each assignment and how the Council manages the risk of fraud.

### 2.5 *Scope of internal audit activities*

The scope of internal audit work includes:

- The entire control environment of the Council, comprising financial and non-financial systems.
- Reviewing controls that protect the interests of the Council in its dealings with partnerships in which the Council has an involvement.

Internal audit may also provide assurance services to parties outside the Council as appropriate and with the agreement of the Council.

## Section Three

### RESOURCING & DELIVERY OF INTERNAL AUDIT

#### 3.1 *Resource requirements*

The level of resource required to deliver an effective internal audit service to the Council has been assessed based on the need to provide adequate audit coverage of the Council's:

- Key financial systems
- Risk management and governance arrangements
- Front line services
- Support services
- Merseyside Pension Fund
- Procurement and contract management activity
- Information management arrangements
- Anti-fraud and corruption arrangements
- Schools including contracted Academy work

Account has also been taken of the need to be able to resource:

- Unplanned work which may arise during the year
- Follow up work to provide assurance that previously agreed recommendations are implemented
- Provision of advice and consultancy to internal customers

### 3.2 *Delivery of the internal audit service*

The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan will be delivered by a highly experienced and suitably qualified in-house team of 10.5 FTE auditors and counter fraud officers led by the Chief Internal Auditor. The level of available internal audit resource is considered sufficient to deliver a robust annual internal audit opinion to the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

As in recent years, where opportunity arises, the internal audit team will also collaborate with internal audit colleagues from other local authorities in regard to the approach and delivery of particular audit assignments.

### 3.3 *Independence and objectivity*

The internal audit team is managed by the Chief Internal Auditor reporting directly to the Director of Finance, the Council's statutory Section 151 Officer and with direct unfettered access to the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee. These arrangements are designed to prevent any potential impairment to independence and objectivity in regard to the provision of an effective internal audit.

### 3.4 *Approach to placing reliance on other sources of assurance*

When planning specific audit assignments, other sources of assurance such as external inspection reports and reviews may be taken into consideration in order to ensure the best use of the audit resource. Any work that is necessary in order to place reliance on other sources of assurance will be determined as required for each assignment.

### 3.5 *Assurance services to other organisations*

Wirral Internal Audit Services provide assurance work to a number of external organisations via agreed SLAs. Time has been included within the audit plan for 2023/24 to accommodate income generating work of this nature during the year, as detailed below:

<b>External Assurance - Traded Provision</b>
Wirral Growth Company
Academy Schools
Merseyside Pension Fund
Maintained Schools – additional work

## Section Four

### INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

#### 4.1 *Distribution of internal audit reports*

At the conclusion of each audit assignment, a draft report and action plan is discussed with the manager responsible for the area which has been audited. A final report containing management responses to any issues identified is subsequently distributed to:

- The relevant Senior Managers for the area reviewed,
- The Directors responsible for the area reviewed,
- The Council's external auditor, Senior Leadership Team and ARMC in summary activity report format.

Following the conclusion of individual audit assignments and presentation of audit reports follow up audits are undertaken within agreed timescales identified in the reports, normally within a six-month period but variable due to the nature of some required actions and designed to evaluate progress made by managers to implement agreed recommendations and areas for action. The outcomes from the follow up work undertaken are reported to responsible managers and any areas of insufficient progress or outstanding action are escalated to senior management and Members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

Details of all audits completed, including agreed actions and timescales for implementation are identified in an online 'real-time' reporting facility (Power Bi) that is utilised by the team to alert Directors and Managers to the outcomes from internal audit work and agreed actions required to address control weaknesses and items of significant risk. This includes colour coded identification of organisational risk opinions and recommendations utilising the RAG rating identified elsewhere in this report and also includes ongoing identification of any items outstanding beyond agreed implementation dates and requiring action by officers. This information is reported to the Operational Performance Group (OPG) and Senior Leadership Team each month.

#### 4.2 *Overall assurance opinion*

In each audit report, an overall opinion on the organisational risk presented is provided for the area audited. The opinion is based on the information obtained in the course of the audit and represents an assessment of the effectiveness of the risk management, control and governance processes in the area audited.

Organisational Risk Rating	Explanation
<b>Major</b>	This opinion indicates that the likelihood/impact of the risks identified during the review, should they materialise, would leave the Council open to major risk of a fundamental or material nature. This opinion suggests that there are some potentially serious weaknesses in the design and/or operation of the control environment that may have a significant impact on the achievement of systems and or corporate objectives if not addressed.
<b>Moderate</b>	This opinion indicates that the likelihood/impact of the risks identified during the review, should they materialise would leave the Council open to moderate risk of a fundamental or material nature. This opinion suggests that there are some weaknesses in the design and/or operation of the control environment that may have varying degrees of impact on the achievement of the systems and/or corporate objectives.
<b>Minor</b>	This opinion indicates that the likelihood/impact of the risks identified during the review, should these materialise, would leave the Council open to minor non-fundamental or material risk.
<b>Negligible</b>	There were no weaknesses identified during the audit review and that the Council is not exposed to any risks directly associated with the findings.

#### 4.3 *Reporting to elected members*

On a regular scheduled basis throughout the year internal audit update/progress reports are presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee Members summarising the outcomes of internal audit work and any significant matters identified. Such matters may include risk exposures, governance weaknesses, performance improvement opportunities and value for money issues and include those matters escalated to Members for action.

#### 4.4 *Annual Audit Opinion*

An annual report is presented to the Audit and Risk Management Committee which includes the Chief Internal Auditor's overall opinion on the Council's risk management, control and governance processes. This opinion forms one of the sources of

assurance in support of the Council's Annual Governance Statement. The opinion is based upon the collective findings from the internal audit work completed during the year.

## Section Five

### INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN - METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 *Requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards*

The PSIAS state that the 'chief audit executive must establish risk-based plans to determine the priorities of the internal audit activity, consistent with the organisation's goals'.

#### 5.2 *Development of the Audit Plan*

In developing the Audit Plan, account has been taken of:

- The Council's overall risk management processes including the Corporate Risk Register and departmental/service registers
- Senior management's views on risk in their areas of responsibility
- The results of previous internal audit work
- Other existing sources of assurance, including the work of external audit
- New or emerging risks affecting the Council or local government as a whole
- Known changes to the Council's business, operations, programs, systems, and controls
- The requirement to ensure sufficient and wide-ranging coverage in order to provide a robust annual audit opinion
- Any planned work deferred from the 2022/23 Audit Plan that is still considered a priority

This year the Audit Plan has been developed to identify themed areas for audit attention during 2023/24 as at the date of writing this report and indicates areas that have been earmarked for audit activity in year, at this time. The Audit Plan deliberately does not however identify specific detailed audit assignments, allowing a higher degree of flexibility and dynamism during the year to accommodate risks emerging as a result of the changing landscape and risk profile of the organisation for the duration of the Audit Plan. This approach follows a significant period of change and continuing uncertainty across the sector and reflects current best practice adopted by the relevant professional bodies and peer colleagues nationally.

### 5.3 *Alignment of the Audit Plan to the Council's Corporate Priorities*

The Audit Plan has been prepared in a way that reflects key risks presented to the Council whilst also taking account of corporate priorities. It is acknowledged that the Corporate Risk Register is currently subject to an exercise to ensure that it is aligned to the new corporate plan and as such the audit plan will be adjusted in year to reflect any changes made and emerging risks as a result of this work. Some planned review areas clearly contribute to more than one risk or priority. For presentational purposes the review theme areas have been listed in a manner that is considered most closely linked to the relevant directorate.

### 5.4 *Budgeted time allocations*

Time allocations will be determined and agreed for each area included in the Audit Plan commensurate with the available staffing resource. This process is in accordance with current best professional practice across the sector. It is anticipated that sufficient resource is available to enable targeted audit work to be completed in each of the areas identified during the year.

### 5.5 *Timing and prioritisation of audit work*

The intention is to complete audit work in all themed areas identified in the Audit Plan within the year. However, the exact scope, timing and respective prioritisation of work will take account of:

- The need to finalise any work from 2022/23 that remains incomplete at year-end
- The requirement to provide assurance over the Council's key financial systems
- The views of management of the service areas in regard to risks presented and the timing of work
- Any urgent unplanned work arising or changes in the level of audit resources available

### 5.6 *Significant interim changes to planned work*

It is essential that the Audit Plan is kept under constant review during the year to ensure that it remains dynamic and relevant, reflecting the evolving risk profile of the organisation. It will be necessary therefore to constantly make revisions to the Audit

Plan in year, in order to respond to changes in priorities or changes in the level of risk presented. These and any other significant updates will be reported to the Audit and Risk Management Committee at regular intervals during the year.

## Section Six

### SUMMARY INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
<b>ADULT CARE AND HEALTH</b>		
Social Care.	<p>Council in conjunction with NHS partners enables care provision for vulnerable citizens; important to ensure care quality, partnership working and financial aspects are effective.</p> <p>Planning work has identified several risk areas that require consideration for audit input or review during 23/24.</p>	<p>Areas included in 23/24 for detailed audit work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- implementation of the new Integrated Commissioning System</li> <li>- Arrangements for Social Care contracts</li> <li>- Social Worker/Care transfer.</li> <li>- Direct Payments.</li> </ul>
<b>CORPORATE OFFICE</b>		
Business Planning & Performance Management	Effective business planning and performance management arrangements remain key to ensuring Council activity is geared to the achievement of Council objectives.	Review of aspects of the business and service planning and performance management arrangements in a sample of Council departments.
Partnership arrangements	Effective partnership working essential to delivery of Wirral Plan aims.	Review of Council Partnership arrangements in support of Wirral Plan.
Response to external reviews	The Council needs to have effective arrangements in place to respond to issues emerging from external	Respond to issues arising from the corporate response to external reviews that require audit review.

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
	assurance, peer, external audit and Improvement Board reviews.	
<b>CHILDREN FAMILY &amp; EDUCATION</b>		
Maintained Schools	Appropriate financial control arrangements and sound governance procedures are essential to ensuring effective financial management in schools.	<p>An audit programme focussed on financial and governance risks is undertaken at all maintained schools over a four-five year programme, with phasing planned based on risk assurance rating.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ongoing support and guidance on effective control environments provided as requested.</li> <li>- Attendance at North-West Schools Audit Group meetings and regular liaison meetings with LMS.</li> <li>- Liaison with Business Manager cluster group meetings.</li> <li>- Preparation and delivery of presentations.</li> <li>- Updating Schools risk assessment.</li> </ul>
Supporting Families Grants	The Council needs to maximise income and prove details claimed are accurate and valid whilst also ensuring that regulatory requirements are fulfilled correctly.	Audit verification of multiple aspects of grant claim details including appraisal of outcomes.
Academy Schools (not controlled by Childrens Dept)	Address significant risks presented whilst continuing to explore alternatives for wider Internal Audit service development.	Agreeing SLAs with a small number of Academies to undertake their internal scrutiny role.

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
<b>NEIGHBOURHOODS</b>		
Climate Emergency Response	Failure to respond effectively and develop plans/adaptations could lead to legal challenge, reputational damage, increased costs and a lack of resilience.	Assessment of risks and mitigating controls to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to manage this corporate risk.
Commercialism	Impact on future income flows of any failure to develop and deliver commercial culture and processes.	Annual review of governance, specifically efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making regarding commercial ideas and the actual improvements in income as a result. Planned work may include testing to ensure Council charging policies are correctly and properly applied.
Waste Management	Waste contract commissioning and management.	Reactive and targeted consultancy
<b>FINANCE</b>		
Financial Resilience	Failure to effectively manage changes to the way that the Council is funded could lead to poor decisions on service reductions, unplanned efficiencies and in year overspends, resulting in the Council being unable to deliver priority services to vulnerable communities.	Assessment of risks and mitigating controls to ensure the Council's has robust arrangements in place for ongoing financial resilience, including the achievement of savings plans.
Key Financial Systems	These systems provide material disclosures for the financial statements. (S151 requirement).	High level reviews and targeted testing of the effectiveness of the key controls within key financial system, focused in the following areas:

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing controls</li> <li>- Emerging key risks areas arising from the implementation of the new ERP system.</li> </ul>
Commissioning and Procurement	It is important for the organisation to ensure compliance with key internal controls and good practice for commissioning and procurement. This ensures the continued delivery of vital services in a secure/controlled manner and avoids the failure of critical suppliers.	<p>Areas considered for inclusion in 23/24 detailed work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contracts Register and Retendering</li> <li>- Contracts Governance</li> <li>- Matrix Contract</li> <li>- Breach Notices</li> <li>- Purchase Orders</li> </ul>
Transactional Management – Benefits & Revenues	These systems provide essential financial support to vulnerable clients.	Provision of assurance to s151 Officer on a cyclical basis in respect to the various Benefit systems. i.e. HB, CTSS, DHP's, IHM & LWASS
Client Finance Support Team	These operations provide essential support to vulnerable clients.	Assurance on effectiveness of the client finance support systems reviewed on a cyclical basis. i.e. Direct Payments, Court of Protection.
Personal Finance Unit	These operations provide essential support to vulnerable clients.	Assurance on effectiveness of the personal finance support systems reviewed on a cyclical basis following a comprehensive service review.
Financial Support Systems	Provision of assurance to the S151 Officer on the supporting financial sub-systems.	Reviews evaluating and testing the effectiveness of the key controls within the financial sub-systems that support the Council's business and focused on any emerging key risks areas.

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
Merseyside Pension Fund	The Council as administering authority for the Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of the financial affairs of the Fund and provide assurance they are managed to secure effective, economic and efficient use of resources and to safeguard its assets.	Provision of an opinion on the MPF control environment based on the outcomes of a separate cyclical MPF internal audit plan. The plan is updated annually to take account of the emerging key risks facing the Fund and is delivered in accordance with the approved service level agreement. The work is split between: Pensions Administration; Investments, Accounting & Compliance; and cross cutting risk areas.
<b>RESOURCES</b>		
Project Governance	Projects may be established with inappropriate approval processes and inadequate internal control and project governance arrangements which can lead to ineffective outcomes and reputational damage	Assessment of project governance arrangements to ensure arrangements for the project(s) reviewed are appropriate for effective project management and the delivery of intended outcomes.
Compliance with Policies and Procedures	Appropriate procedures must be established, understood, and consistently applied. Non-compliance with corporate policies and procedures across disciplines such as HR, finance, information, procurement, health & safety, put the reputation of the Council and the health and safety of our staff and residents at risk, and may lead to financial penalty and ultimately loss of life.	Assessment of risks and mitigating controls to ensure the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure compliance with policies and procedures; including operation of the Council's Early Voluntary Retirement scheme  Support for the Corporate Governance Group's oversight of compliance..

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
Health and Safety Management	If health and safety/compliance policies and procedures are not sufficiently developed, tested or adhered to by officers, members or contractors, this could lead to an incident resulting in harm to employees/Members/members of the public, legal challenge and reputational damage.	Assessment of risks and mitigating controls to ensure full compliance with legislative requirements and policies agreed with the Council's partners.
Grants	Essential to maximise income and prove details claimed are accurate and prompt.	Responsive work prior to despatch of claims
<b>LAW &amp; GOVERNANCE</b>		
Corporate Governance / Annual Governance Statement (AGS)	<p>Statutory requirement for the Council to produce an Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>Failure to maintain effective corporate governance could result in poor decision-making, malpractice and breach of legislation, leading to regulatory intervention and significant cost, both in financial terms and to the reputation of the Council.</p>	<p>Undertake the Annual Governance Review and lead in the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, ensuring it aligns with knowledge and understanding of structures and processes in place.</p> <p>Provide support and challenge to development of governance arrangements, including attendance and support for Corporate Governance Group and review of the Code of Corporate Governance.</p> <p>Assessment of risks and mitigating controls to ensure the Council maintains effective corporate governance.</p>

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
Constitution	Essential to overall good governance that the Council's Constitution is current, relevant and functions effectively.	Input to planned review and feedback to Monitoring Officer regarding assurance on effectiveness and corporate compliance.
Companies Governance	External reviews have highlighted governance risks in relation to councils' interests in companies.	Input to planned consultancy review of Board governance arrangements for Council companies.
Elections	An area of high public profile, particularly with all-out elections in 2023. Robust arrangements required to maintain public confidence and avoid reputational damage.	Review of robustness of self-assessment of performance standard for Returning Officers
<b>REGENERATION &amp; PLACE</b>		
Regeneration Projects	Significant investment in many development projects largely around the Birkenhead area necessitate regular internal audit coverage to ensure funding streams are maximised, specific initiatives progress as per agreed plans, contracts let are properly tendered and managed, and expenditure is appropriately controlled.	Continuation of audit input to major capital developments, including delivery of outputs and revenue sustainability to ensure exposure from commercial investments is being managed effectively.
Property	Key organisational risk area.	Assessment of risk and mitigating controls over Asset Management systems including controls over disposals and acquisitions.

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
Emerging risk areas	Planning work has identified several risk areas that require consideration for audit review during 23/24.	<p>Areas considered for inclusion in 23/24 detailed work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- further ongoing reviews of key issues arising from the LCC BV review including relationships between leading officers, members and contractors.</li> <li>- review of issues relating to the planning function, including compliance with requirements for the implementation of the Local Plan and follow-up of earlier planning system review in the context of a new IT system.</li> </ul>
Wirral Growth Company	Organisational risks associated with ongoing maintenance and management of corporate arrangements.	<p>Targeted reviews of key operating systems within the Wirral Growth Company including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contract management processes and delivery of agreed outcomes.</li> <li>- Creditors/Payments</li> </ul>
<b>ICT</b>		
Cyber Security	A significant and ever-increasing risk is presented in this area and IT security must be sufficient to deter, detect and prevent unauthorised access to IT systems which could result in loss of data and disruption to Council services.	<p>Assessment of controls in place to reduce the risk of successful Cyber Attack using the guidance provided by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). This includes 10 steps on how organisations can protect themselves in cyberspace in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management</li> <li>• Engagement &amp; Training</li> </ul>

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Architecture &amp; Configuration</li> <li>• Vulnerability Management</li> <li>• Identity &amp; Access Management</li> <li>• Data Security</li> <li>• Logging &amp; Monitoring</li> <li>• Incident Management</li> <li>• Supply Chain Security</li> </ul>
Information Management	It is essential that the Council is compliant with relevant data and information management legislation which if not effective may lead to loss or breach of personal data creating security or reputational risk.	<p>Assessment of controls in place to ensure that personal information is managed and protected in line with relevant Policies and Procedures. Areas identified for audit include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Digital Asset Disposal</li> <li>- Information Governance</li> </ul>
IT Projects/Systems Development	It is essential to the Council that IT risks and controls are sufficiently considered throughout IT projects and during systems developments and are consistent with the Digital, Data and Technology Strategy.	<p>Ongoing advice, consultancy, and targeted audit work to provide assurance that IT risks and controls are embedded and considered throughout the lifecycle of IT related projects/systems development. Areas identified for input include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ERP/Oracle Fusion</li> <li>- EYES</li> </ul>
Business Continuity Planning	It is essential that the Council maintains effective business continuity plans that enable it to respond to an incident, that could if unchecked result in a major	Assurances that Digital has BCPs in place, that are up to date, and tested, to mitigate the risk of being unable to respond to an incident such as IT failure. This includes:

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
	failure in service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Supplier Management</li> <li>- Accounts Payable</li> </ul>
Emerging risk areas	Ongoing work to identify risk areas that require consideration for audit review during 23/24.	Areas considered for inclusion in 22/23 detailed work will include an audit of the physical management of the relocated CCTV Control room and the data processes in place.
<b>COUNTER FRAUD</b>		
Counter Fraud Strategies, Policies and Awareness Training	Fraud and corruption are ever present risks to all organisations. It is important therefore that the Council's arrangements to counter fraud reflect best practice.	<p>Review internal fraud policies and evaluation of awareness and compliance across the Council and continued delivery of awareness training for all employees.</p> <p>Collaborative working exercises across both the North West and Mersey region.</p>
National Fraud Initiative (NFI)	NFI matches data across organisations and systems to help public bodies identify anomalies which may signify fraud. The Council is required by law to participate in NFI.	Coordination of the NFI exercise, including the investigation of matches and review of user outcomes. To identify possible cases of fraud and error from data provided through NFI and ensure that corrective action is taken in respect of any identified under/overpayment.
Fraud – Reactive	Fraud referrals deemed of sufficient significance to be referred to and accepted by the CIA are investigated by Internal Audit in line with the Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.	Investigations of allegations/referrals to Internal Audit.

Area of Audit Work	Risk Context	Overview of Assurance
Benefits and Revenues – Reactive Fraud work	Fraud referrals involving Council Tax benefits and deemed of sufficient significance to be referred to and accepted by the CIA are investigated by Internal Audit in line with the Counter-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.	Investigations of benefits and revenues allegations and referrals to Internal Audit.
Fraud – Proactive	Fraud and corruption are ever present risks to all organisations. It is important therefore that a programme of proactive anti-fraud work is undertaken to prevent and detect fraud.	Risk based proactive work to prevent and detect fraud. Includes acknowledged high risk areas such as: Conflicts of Interests Gifts and Hospitality Expenses Payments
<b>ADVISORY</b>		
Audit Queries	Day to day client queries regarding identification and management of systems, risks and controls.	Time allocation for specific queries that arise from directorates that require audit services.
Corporate Working Groups National/Regional Working Groups	Co-ordinated national and regional solutions to implementation of controls to manage risks.	Time allocation to contribute to Audit Working Groups (in addition to that included under respective risk areas above)
<b>CONTINGENCY</b>		
		Time allocation to allow for new emerging risks and unplanned work for example large investigations.